

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Final Environmental Assessment for the Proposed U.S. Courthouse Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Prepared by:
General Services Administration
20 North 8th Street
Philadelphia, PA
19107-3191

July 14, 2006



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

General Services Administration (GSA) proposes to undertake the site selection and construction of a new courthouse for the U.S. Courts for the Middle District of Pennsylvania in the City of Harrisburg. GSA has prepared this Environmental Assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), GSA Order ADM 1095.1F – Environmental Considerations in Decision Making, and the Public Building Service (PBS) NEPA Desk Guide, October 1999.

GSA has prepared this Environmental Assessment as part of its due diligence efforts to ensure all environmental issues are identified, impacts are assessed, and potential mitigation measures are outlined while selecting a site for the U.S. Courthouse. This Environmental Assessment is one of many factors that will be considered by the government in selecting a site for the U.S. Courthouse. Other factors that will be considered include the Court's program requirements, security considerations, and costs.

The U.S. District Court and court-related agencies are currently located in the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse at 228 Walnut Street in downtown Harrisburg. These facilities serve court activity in the Middle District of Pennsylvania. Due to security concerns, operational deficiencies, and existing and future space needs, the U.S. Courthouse no longer serves the courts and court family efficiently.

The Proposed Action is to construct a new, stand-alone U.S. Courthouse in the City of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The courthouse would be approximately 262,970 gross square feet in size and would include eight courtrooms. Construction is planned to begin in 2009 and be completed in early 2012.

PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to construct a new U.S. Courthouse for the Pennsylvania Middle District Court in Harrisburg to meet the Court's expansion needs and improve operational efficiency and judicial security. The proposed courthouse would be designed to satisfy the 10-year space requirement and the immediate security needs of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania and related agencies, which

include: the U.S. District Court, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, U.S. Probation Office, Office of the U.S. Attorney, U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Trustee, and GSA. The site should also be large enough to house the Courts' 30-year space requirement.

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts rated Harrisburg as the fifth court city most in need of a new courthouse building. Originally constructed in 1966, the Ronald Reagan Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Harrisburg was altered in 1994 to meet short-term needs of the court components, but these alterations were limited and did not fully address the necessary security, circulation, and space requirements of the U.S. Courts Design Guide. In addition, these alterations did not address expansion needs, and additional alterations to expand the court's space would result in compromised adjacencies, functional deficiencies, and the relocation of most or all related agencies.

ALTERNATIVES

More than 25 sites were identified within the City of Harrisburg as potential locations for the new U.S. Courthouse. After determining whether or not the proposed sites fulfilled the purpose and need of the project, sites were preliminarily evaluated based on a list of site selection criteria established for the project. The sites were evaluated on a variety of factors including (but not limited to) project requirements, cost, and technical criteria. Some specific criteria include site size, security, location, floodplain, historic impacts, acquisition costs, social impacts, and relocation costs. Through this site evaluation process, 12 sites – the “Long List” sites – were identified for further environmental and technical inquiry.

Additional information was subsequently collected on the environmental features and issues associated with the sites. GSA evaluated the Long List and selected three sites for detailed analysis. The three alternatives sites are: N. 3rd and Forster Street, N. 6th and Verbeke Street, and N. 6th and Basin Street. These three sites, along with the No Action Alternative, are analyzed in detail in this Environmental Assessment.

GSA has identified the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative as the Preferred Alternative for the U.S. Courthouse. The “Preferred Alternative” is the alternative which GSA believes would best fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical and other factors. However, it is important to understand that the selection of preferred alternative is not the final site selection. GSA will focus its efforts on the preferred site as we finalize the site evaluation and environmental studies. A

recommendation will be made to the GSA Regional Administrator, who will have the final approval on a site selection. A final site selection is scheduled to be announced this summer.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the Pennsylvania Middle District Court in Harrisburg would continue to occupy the existing U.S. Courthouse in the Ronald Reagan Federal Building. Thus, this alternative would represent a continuation of the status quo with inadequate conditions in the Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse. These conditions would persist and likely deteriorate as the District Court caseload continues to grow as projected. The No Action Alternative does not meet the project purpose and needs of providing enhanced security, correcting operational deficiencies, and providing increased space for current and future needs of the U.S. Courthouse. However, as required by NEPA, the No Action Alternative is included in this Environmental Assessment to provide a baseline for assessing the magnitude of environmental effects of the action alternatives.

Build Alternatives

N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative

The N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative consists of a 3.6 acre block bounded by N. 3rd Street, North Street, Green Street, and Forster Street. Buildings located within this block include approximately 40 two- and three-story rowhouses in which uses include residences (both owner inhabited and rental homes), office, restaurant, and retail; three apartment buildings, two buildings with restaurant/entertainment businesses; and one five-story office building with associated parking.

N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative

The N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative consists of a 6 acre block bounded by N. 6th Street, Herr Street, Capital Street, and Verbeke Street. Buildings located within this block include Cumberland Court Apartments (approximately 108 housing units) and associated surface parking lots and the Friends Meeting House.

N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative

The N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative consists of a 6.4 acre block bounded by N. 6th Street, Basin Street, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) building, and

the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School. Buildings located within this block include the Jackson Lick Apartments, consisting of two high rise apartment buildings and parking lots, and pool house for and parking lot for the Jackson Lick Community Pool.

IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Chapter III, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, describes the natural, social, cultural, and manmade environment of the project area and addresses the potential for impacts of constructing the proposed U.S. Courthouse on each of the build alternatives. The No Action Alternative is also included to provide a baseline for the comparison of impacts.

Existing conditions were studied for each of the three alternatives for resources within the human environment potentially impacted by construction and operation of the U.S. Courthouse. Resources studied in detail include: floodplains; land use planning and zoning; population; housing; economy and employment; taxes and revenue; community services and facilities; community cohesion; utilities; traffic and transportation; utilities; and site contamination. While Environmental Justice was not included in the impact topics studied in detail, GSA recognizes that the proposed U.S. Courthouse would have social and economic effects on the City of Harrisburg and the residents at the alternative sites. Therefore GSA conducted a Social Impact Assessment to analyze the potential impact that the construction and operation of the proposed courthouse may have on the social and economic environment. The results of this study are located in Section 3.4, Social Environment, and in Appendix C.

Resources were analyzed to identify direct impacts, indirect impacts, and cumulative effects. Direct impacts are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect impacts are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative impacts are the impacts on the environment, that result from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7 – 1508.8).

Potential impacts are described in terms of:

- Context - are the effects site-specific, local, or even regional?
- Intensity - are the effects negligible, minor, moderate, or major?

- Type - are the effects beneficial or adverse?
- Duration - are the effects short-term, lasting through construction or less than one year, or long-term, lasting more than one year?

The thresholds of change for the intensity of impacts are defined as follows:

- negligible, when the impact is localized and not measurable or at the lowest level of detection;
- minor, when the impact is localized and slight but detectable;
- moderate, when the impact is readily apparent and appreciable; or
- major, when the impact is severely adverse and highly noticeable.

Impact intensities are based on National Park Service definitions. These impact descriptors are consistent with NEPA and the CEQ's implementing regulations (40 CFR 1508), and have been used for Environmental Assessments for GSA and other federal agencies. For the purposes of this Environmental Assessment, a major impact may be indicative of significance under NEPA.

Section 3.4 of the Environmental Assessment also includes information on potential measures the government would take to mitigate for impacts from the proposed action if the subject alternative site were selected. Final decisions on mitigation measures will be included with the final site selection.

For each of the alternatives considered in this Environmental Assessment, every attempt has been made to assess the "worst case" or greatest impacts that could occur. Because site layouts have not been prepared for the build alternatives shown in Chapter II, Alternatives Considered, impacts were analyzed assuming the entire area within the alternatives would be disturbed. GSA will continue to look for ways to minimize and mitigate impacts during final design and construction.

Following is a summary of impacts to resources included for detailed study in the Environmental Assessment, including the Social Impact Assessment in Appendix C. Consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) continues with the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (the Pennsylvania Historical and

Museum Commission), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other consulting parties.

Floodplains and Flooding

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, directs federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid direct and indirect support of the floodplain development whenever there is a practicable alternative. In addition, the GSA's Order ADM 1095.6, Consideration of Floodplains in Decision Making, also prohibits construction within the floodplain unless there is no practicable alternative.

None of the build alternatives is located in or adjacent to the 100- or 500-year floodplain, and, therefore, there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on floodplains as a result of the proposed action. In the event of a 100-year or 500-year flood, access from major and secondary arterials to all of the sites would be disrupted. Flash flooding may also temporarily impede access via commuter routes to all three sites and the City in general. Therefore, there may be a minor, indirect, short-term, adverse impact on court operations from floods.

Land Use Planning and Zoning

Land use on each of the build alternatives would be substantially altered due to the demolition of existing structures and construction of the proposed courthouse. Use of the alternative sites for the courthouse would be compatible with commercial and government land uses in the vicinity of each site; however use of the sites would not be consistent with adjacent residential land uses. Under all the alternatives under consideration, indirect impacts to land use may occur as properties in the vicinity of the courthouse are converted to commercial activities and parking to serve employees and visitors to the courts, or to provide office space for businesses with activities related to the courts. While this impact would be adverse in the case of the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative; indirect impacts would be beneficial under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street and N. 6th and Basin Street Alternatives where vacant parcels are available for redevelopment. Therefore, the build alternatives would have moderate, direct and indirect, long-term, adverse and beneficial impacts on land use planning in the City.

Based on the zoning and descriptions provided in the City of Harrisburg Planning and Zoning Code, construction of the U.S. Courthouse on the alternative sites would not be consistent with the existing zoning. The new courthouse may exceed the city's height restrictions for the sites depending on final design. However, according to the City of Harrisburg, Bureau of Planning, the city recognizes the diminishing capacity of land for development and the inability to expand outward; therefore, the Zoning Hearing Board frequently grants special exceptions to allow for upward development (Bureau of Planning, City of Harrisburg, 2005). Construction of the proposed courthouse on the alternative sites would have minor, direct, long-term, adverse impacts to local zoning. No indirect or cumulative impacts to zoning are anticipated.

Population and Housing

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 3rd and Forster Alternative would result in the displacement of 79 residential units (15 owner occupied, 64 tenant occupied). This would have a minor, direct, long-term, adverse impact on housing stock in the City of Harrisburg. Relocations would have major, direct, short-term, adverse impacts to individual residents. There is adequate replacement housing available in the City of Harrisburg for the residents of the N. 3rd and Forster Alternative. As GSA would comply with the Uniform Relocation Act; there would be a minor, direct, long-term, adverse impact to residents.

Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 6th and Verbeke Alternative would result in the acquisition and relocation of 108 apartment units with approximately 200 residents. This loss of housing would have a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact on the availability of affordable, subsidized housing in the City of Harrisburg and a major, direct, short-term, adverse impact on the low-income residents of the Cumberland Court apartment complex.

Residents of Cumberland Court are subsidized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Rental Assistance Payments (RAP) program and Section 236 of the National Housing Act. RAP is a project-based rental assistance program. Unlike tenant-based housing vouchers (Section 8 vouchers) which travel with the assisted family, RAP is specific to the property – in this case Cumberland Court. Research indicates that although no similar subsidized housing with project-based assistance is or will be available in the foreseeable future, early payment of the mortgage by the property owner would qualify residents displaced under this alternative for tenant based housing vouchers (Section 8 vouchers). GSA would coordinate with HUD to ensure that Section 8 vouchers

would be provided for the number of units at the property and allow the tenants, with the help of GSA relocation specialists, to secure housing on the private market. According to the Harrisburg Housing Authority, there is substantial landlord interest in tenants with Section 8 vouchers (H.C. Peck, 2005). Therefore, with compliance with the Uniform Relocation Act, there would be a minor, direct, long-term, adverse impact on displaced residents under this alternative

Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 6th and Basin Alternative would result in the acquisition and relocation of 144 occupied units in the Jackson Lick Apartments. No new public or private assisted-living housing for low-income elderly or disabled residents is or will be available in the Harrisburg area for the foreseeable future. Displaced Jackson Lick residents could be relocated to other existing public housing in Harrisburg if units were available; however based on the current turnover rate, an adequate number of available units have not been identified. In addition, the replacement housing payment (RHP) for each displaced resident is based on the individual contributing 30 percent of their gross monthly household income toward the rent and utilities of a comparable unit as they currently do to live at Jackson Lick. The average rent payment for Jackson Lick residents is currently \$203, and the high average of available replacement one-bedroom units in comparable complexes was found to be \$750 per month. This high average of \$750 per month is more than three times the current average rental payment for Jackson Lick residents. The difference between the residents' current rent and the market rate would be made up by benefits under the Uniform Relocation Act. However, these benefits to displaced individuals would expire after 42 months leaving relocated residents with no continuing public housing assistance (H.C. Peck, 2005). Therefore, there would be a major, direct, long-term adverse impact on the housing stock for low-income, elderly and disabled persons in the City of Harrisburg, and a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact on the low-income, elderly and disabled residents currently residing in the apartment complex.

Moderate, indirect, long-term, adverse impacts to population and housing may occur if residential properties in the vicinity of the alternative sites are converted to commercial uses compatible with the courthouse.

Economy and Employment

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse under the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would directly impact economic and employment conditions in the City of Harrisburg through the displacement of 22 businesses: 17 office entities, five restaurants, and one

nightclub. There is comparable office supply in Harrisburg to meet the demand of displaced office occupants from the N. 3rd and Forster Alternative; therefore, there would be a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact to individual office entities and a negligible, direct, long-term, adverse impact to the City of Harrisburg economy. Five restaurants and one nightclub would be displaced under the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative. Properties were identified for the impacted restaurants; however, it cannot be assumed that the businesses would immediately relocate to an available parcel. If the restaurants and nightclub are unable to relocate within the City of Harrisburg, there would be a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact to the nightclub and restaurant owners and a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact to the City of Harrisburg economy.

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative would directly impact economic and employment conditions through the displacement of the Cumberland Court Apartment complex and the Friends Meeting House, which houses the Quaker Church and the Praise and Play Early Learning Center, both of which are non-profit organizations. Relocation space similar to the existing facilities has not been identified for these entities. The Friends Meeting House could be relocated into available commercial space in the vicinity of their current site until a new facility could be constructed. If the apartment complex and day care center are unable to relocate in the City of Harrisburg, there would be a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact to the business owners and a minor, direct, long-term, adverse impact to the City of Harrisburg economy.

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative would not directly impact economic conditions in the City of Harrisburg. No businesses would be relocated under this alternative. However, there would be moderate, indirect, short-term, adverse impacts to employment under this alternative. Harrisburg Housing Authority (HHA) employees at the Jackson Lick Apartment complex may be temporarily unemployed if the HHA is unable to place them in new positions.

Under each of the build alternatives there would be moderate, indirect, short-term, adverse impacts to employment. Employees may be temporarily unemployed as businesses relocate. However, the relatively low unemployment rate in the region indicates that the displaced employees should be able to find new employment with relative ease.

Construction of the proposed courthouse on any of the alternative sites would result in major, direct and indirect, short-term, beneficial impacts to the economy and employment through the hiring of construction workers and expenditures on construction supplies and services. In

addition, operation of the courthouse would result in major, direct and indirect, long-term, beneficial impacts to the economy through the employment of court personnel and expenditures for court supplies and services.

Taxes and Revenue

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would result in a loss of tax revenue from residential and business taxes. The loss of these tax revenues would have a moderate, direct and indirect, long-term, adverse impact on taxes and revenues for the City of Harrisburg.

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative would result in a loss of tax revenue from business taxes paid by Cumberland Court Apartments. The Harrisburg Religious Society of Friends (Friends), which is also known as the Quaker Church, is tax exempt; however the church makes “In Lieu of Taxes” payments to the City of Harrisburg for the Friends Meeting House. The loss of these tax revenues would have a moderate, direct and indirect, long-term, adverse impact on taxes and revenues for the City of Harrisburg.

Construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse on the N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative would have no impact on taxes and revenue because the property is exempt from city taxes and does not contribute to business tax revenues.

Construction and operation of the proposed courthouse would have direct and indirect, long-term, moderate beneficial impacts on taxes and revenue through income taxes paid by construction workers, court employees, and employees of businesses related to the courts.

Community Services

Services provided by the Capital Area Transit Authority (CAT), the Harrisburg Bureau of Police, the Harrisburg Bureau of Fire, and emergency health care facilities would not be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed action. Under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street and N. 6th and Basin Street Alternatives, displacement of the residents of the Cumberland Court Apartments or the Jackson Lick Apartment could result in moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impacts to healthcare if these residents are not relocated to areas with access to health care services. In addition, residents may experience moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impacts if they are not relocated to areas with access to public transportation.

Community Facilities

Under the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative the loss of tax revenues would directly impact the budget of Harrisburg School District, therefore creating a minor to moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact. Under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative the loss of tax revenue would directly impact the budget of the Harrisburg School District, therefore creating a minor, direct, long-term adverse impact.

Under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternatives, displacement of residents could change enrollment patterns for the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School. However, as school age children from the N. 6th and Verbeke Alternative Site make up only 4 percent of the Benjamin Franklin School population, this impact is anticipated to be minor. Additionally, with the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative, there would be a moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impact to the patrons of the Praise and Play Early Learning Center.

Under both the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative and the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative, there may be a fluctuation in membership of the YMCA with the loss of residents and a gain of Courthouse employees. This would result in a minor, indirect, long-term, adverse impact to the Harrisburg Area East Shore YMCA for the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative and the Camp Curtin YMCA for the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative. Under the N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative, there would be major, direct and indirect, long-term, adverse impacts to the Jackson Lick Community Pool through the displacement of the pool house located on the Jackson Lick property which would necessitate closure of the swimming pool.

Under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative, the Harrisburg Friends Meeting House would be displaced resulting in a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact to this church and its congregation.

Community Cohesion

Based on input from members of the community and associated community groups, residents of the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative are highly committed to this neighborhood, and there is cohesion among this community. Under the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative, the impact to residents as a result of being displaced from this community would be major, direct, adverse, and could be short-term or long-term, depending on personal circumstances, as some people adapt more readily to major life changes. The loss of this neighborhood would be felt by surrounding residents as well.

Based on input from members of the community and associated groups, the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative is a high quality subsidized apartment community, and the residents have expressed a satisfaction with living in this community suggesting that residents are committed to this community. Cumberland Court Apartments has been characterized as a safe, stable neighborhood of upwardly mobile residents. There is currently a two-year waiting list for one- and two-bedroom apartments and a five-year waiting list for three-bedroom apartments. Under the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative, the impact to residents as a result of being displaced from this community would be major, direct, adverse and could be short-term or long-term, depending on personal circumstances, as some people adapt more readily to major life changes. The Friends Meeting House, its congregation, and the daycare operating in the Meeting House are located in an ideal location to serve this community. The impact to the Friends congregation and the daycare operation would be moderate, direct, and adverse, and could be short-term or long-term depending on the time period for relocation. The impact to the surrounding community as a result of the Friends congregation and the daycare center being displaced would be moderate, direct, adverse, and would be short-term or long-term depending on the site chosen by the Friends and the daycare center for relocation.

Based on input from members of the community and associated groups, the elderly and disabled residents of Jackson Lick are vulnerable to disruptions and potentially less able to easily adapt to changes. According to an advocate, many of the current residents were moved from the Jackson building when it was closed for renovation, and are now faced with the possibility of another move to an uncertain location (Jones, 2005). Residents have expressed fear and apprehension about their unknown future.

There is currently no available facility into which the entire Jackson Lick community could be moved. This would mean for many residents, not only the loss of their homes in this familiar setting, but the loss of close companions. Therefore, the potential loss of the Jackson Lick community to its residents would constitute a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact.

Archeological Resources

The N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative has a moderate to high potential for historic archeological resources associated with past uses on the sites. Features that are most likely present include structure basements, outbuilding foundations, cisterns, wells, and privies. Demolition of existing structures, grading, and excavation activities associated with

construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse may have a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact on archeological resources.

The N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative has a moderate potential for historic archeological resources associated with past uses on the sites. The archeological deposits present in the 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative may include both features and deposits if settlement of the area predated ca. 1875, as appears to have been the case. Demolition of existing structures, grading, and excavation activities associated with construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse may have a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact on archeological resources.

The N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative has a moderate potential for historic archeological resources associated with past uses on the sites. The archeological deposits present in the 6th and Basin Street Alternative may include both features and deposits if settlement of the area predated ca. 1875, as appears to have been the case. Demolition of existing structures, grading, and excavation activities associated with construction of the proposed U.S. Courthouse may have a moderate, direct, long-term, adverse impact on archeological resources.

Historic Structures

Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would result in the demolition of approximately 40 rowhouses, including those located in the 800 block of Green Street, which have been individually described in the National Register nomination form as contributing resources to the Harrisburg Historic District. Other resources that would be demolished and that are not specifically mentioned in the National Register nomination, but contribute to the overall significance of the district, include resources found on North and Briggs Streets.

Additionally, the construction of the new courthouse would add a new visual feature that would be of a larger size and scale than the smaller-scaled rowhouses that characterize the Harrisburg Historic District. Therefore, the 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would have a major, direct, long-term, adverse impact to historic structures. Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would have moderate, indirect, long-term, adverse visual impacts to Midtown Historic District, the Pennsylvania State Capitol District, and the Fox Ridge Historic District historic resources.

Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative would not directly impact any historic structures. Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative would have moderate, indirect, long-term, adverse impacts to the Broad Street Market, the German Evangelical Zion Lutheran Church and the Fox Ridge Historic District.

Construction of the proposed courthouse on the N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative would not directly impact any historic structures. Because the proposed courthouse height, scale, massing, and setback on the site would be similar to that of the structures currently present on the site, the proposed courthouse would not result in a noticeable change of physical characteristics or setting to the Fox Ridge Historic District, the Broad Street Market, or the Bethesda Mission House. Therefore, this alternative would have a negligible, indirect, long-term, adverse impact on historic resources.

Traffic Conditions

Projected traffic growth to the alternative sites would be higher than the annual growth of traffic within the city; however, the number of trips to the proposed courthouse would be insignificant compared to the overall number of trips that would be entering the city. Under the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative, Susquehanna Street between Forster and North Streets; Briggs Street between N. 3rd and Green Streets; and several alleys would be permanently closed for construction of the U.S. Courthouse. These streets and alleys primarily serve residents and business owners located on the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative and are not often used for through traffic. Therefore, this alternative would have a minor, direct, short-term and long-term adverse impact to operating conditions due to changes in existing traffic volumes and patterns.

The N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative and the N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative would both have a minor, direct, short-term and long-term, adverse impact on operating conditions because existing traffic volumes and patterns would only be slightly altered.

Parking

All of the parking facilities in the vicinity of the build alternatives are currently operating at capacity and have waiting lists. The Harrisburg Parking Authority is constructing a new garage at N. 2nd and South Streets and plans to expand the parking garage at N. 7th and Forster Street. These garages will have some spaces available for use by the public.

Therefore, there would be a moderate, direct, long-term adverse impact to parking space availability in the downtown area due to the increase in number of employees, jurors, and visitors requiring all-day parking as well as visitors for shorter periods.

Mass Transit

Because traffic patterns would not be expected to change under any of the build alternatives, there would be no effect to the flow of mass transit vehicles. Bus routes are located in close proximity to all of the build alternatives, making them accessible by mass transit. Bus stops currently located on any of the alternative sites would need to be relocated due to the court's security requirements, resulting in a minor, direct, long-term adverse impact.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

A negligible impact is anticipated for pedestrians as well as bicycles as a result of these traffic pattern changes. The proposed site design for either location would include convenient entrances and exits for employees and visitors to arrive by foot or on bicycles. Depending on where entrances are located and from what direction the majority of the pedestrians and bicyclists travel to and from, existing crosswalks and pedestrian controls may not be sufficient. Therefore, there would be a minor, direct, long-term adverse impact to pedestrian and bicycle access for each of these sites.

Utilities

The proposed courthouse can be accommodated within the planned capacities of regional utility providers. Under the three build alternatives there would be a minor, direct, long-term, adverse impact on electric services.

For the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative there would be a moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impact to natural gas service because the existing low pressure systems in the area including the low pressure gas lines that run in a grid pattern within this site would not be sufficient to serve the proposed courthouse. According to UGI, it would be difficult to accommodate the marginal increase in demand without upgrading the low pressure lines. However, if needed, UGI would install medium pressure lines to accommodate the proposed U.S. Courthouse. Therefore, there would be a moderate, direct, short-term adverse impact due to the relocation and cost to upgrade existing facilities (UGI Utilities, 2005).

Impacts to natural gas would be moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impacts for all three build alternatives due to the cost of relocating existing natural gas lines.

The N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative would have moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impact to centralized heating and cooling because existing steam lines would be to be relocated along Briggs Street. There would be no impact to centralized heating and cooling services for the N. 6th and Verbeke Street and N. 6th and Basin Street Alternatives. There would be a moderate, direct, short-term, beneficial impact to the courthouse if GSA would chose to have steam lines installed.

Under the three build alternatives, there would be a minor, direct and indirect, short-term adverse impact to potable water and wastewater systems due to a slight increase in demand.

Comcast and Verizon's telecommunication services would experience a moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impact on the N. 3rd and Forster Street Alternative due to relocation costs. The N. 6th and Verbeke Street Alternative would have a moderate, direct, short-term, adverse impact on Comcast services due to relocation costs and a loss in revenue, and negligible impacts to Verizon's capacity and services. The N. 6th and Basin Street Alternative would have no impact on Comcast services and negligible impacts to Verizon's capacity and services.

Site Contamination/Hazardous Waste

Construction of the proposed courthouse would require site preparation, including demolition of existing structures that may have asbestos, pcb, or lead containing materials and the excavation of previously buried structures. Removal and disposal of hazardous materials would be in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) (29 CFR 1926.1101), the Resources Conversation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and state regulations.

With proper handling of waste materials, the use of any of the alternative sites would have a minor, direct, short-term, adverse impact on public health and the environment from hazardous materials, wastes, or constituents.